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3400 Forest Pest Management

Vegetative Management Session: Pathology Input
Denny Creek Recreation Area

Forest Supervisor of Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie NF

On September 19-22, Gregory M. Filip, Plant Pathologist from Forest Pest Management, Regional Office, visited the North Bend RD. Purpose of the visit was to participate in a vegetative management session for the Denny Creek Recreation Area. Several people participated in the session, including Jim Olsen, Developed Sites Specialist from the RO; Jim Pollack, Head of Landscape Management from the RO; Jack Shaffer and Slim Erickson, Landscape Architects from the SO; Lee Boecksteigel, Silviculturist from the SO; and Ken White, Landscape Architect from the District.

The Denny Creek Recreation Area is located along the South Fork of the Snoqualmie River and has been used since the early 1900's. The 100-acre area is composed of a campground with 38 units and a summer home tract with 23 homes. Dominant tree species on the site are Pacific silver fir, mountain and western hemlock, with some western redcedar and red alder within riparian zones. Understory shrubs include vine maple, Alaska huckleberry, devils club, and salmonberry. Much of the campground is covered with an overstocked, even-aged stand of silver fir and hemlock about 120 years old. The summer home tract contains most of the older timber, composed of 250+-year-old hemlock and silver fir. Much of this is decadent and has experienced mortality due to severe infestations of dwarf mistletoe (*Arceuthobium tsugense*). The silver firs generally appear unaffected by dwarf mistletoe.

Several trees that are hazards to parking spurs or camping units were identified throughout the campground. Such trees were severely wounded and some had conks of *Hericium abietis* fruiting on old wounds.

Most of the hazard in the Denny Creek Recreation Area occurs adjacent to and within the summer home tract (East Cabin Unit), where several snags and decadent trees, some 150 feet in height, were observed within striking distance of the summer homes. Hemlock appeared to be more of a hazard than silver fir due to the dwarf mistletoe infections and also butt swell and basal conks, which usually indicate severe butt rot. Most of the silver fir appeared healthy, although some had poor live crown ratios or ragged crowns.

The proposed vegetative management plan recommends removal of all old-growth hemlock and unthrifty silver fir in the East Cabin Unit. This would accomplish three goals: (1) eliminate the most hazardous trees, (2) open the canopy for additional sunlight and stimulation of understory trees and shrubs as well as mitigate building deterioration from excessive moisture, and (3) release second-growth trees from competition, insuring a more thrifty stand and provide replacement trees for the decadent ones.

We recommend that hazard trees be identified on a site-by-site basis throughout the entire recreation area. Forest Pest Management pathologists are available to assist the District in recognizing hazard trees. We further recommend that hemlock be discriminated against during planting or thinning in the recreation area. Hemlock is thin-barked and decays readily if wounded. Also, dwarf mistletoe will cause severe growth loss and mortality of infected hemlocks, especially if the dense stand is opened and mistletoe plants are exposed to more sunlight. If FPM can be of further assistance, please contact us.

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cc:
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